Enjoy the Holidays and Prepare for a Busy Year Ahead

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We’ve been busy this fall. We conducted four chemical council meetings, all of them well-attended and very informative.

We also had a chemical sector meeting during the USW’s health, safety and environment conference. The discussion at this meeting centered on training of new employees and fatigue resulting from excessive overtime. Many chemical workers are nearing retirement and the chemical companies need to create mentorship programs so the “old hands” can share what they have learned over the years with new employees.

These meetings are important because they allow chemical workers to network and learn about each other’s contracts. They often hear about other locals’ issues that might be identical to their own and discover how other locals handle them. Many times, they plan strategies together for the council to speak as one voice.

Next February, Local 9-675 in Guin, Ala., will host the 3M Council meeting. My office will send out a council meeting notice to the council members.

Two years ago we had a chemical conference in Atlantic City, N.J., for Districts 4 and 10. Many chemical workers attended, and members said they did not realize other locals had the same issues as their local. This conference encouraged local union leaders to continue talking and helping one another. We hope another such conference can be scheduled sometime next year if there is enough interest.

Looking Forward

Our chemical sector has come a long way from the time I was assigned to lead it. The local unions in our councils are working better together, starting to speak as one voice, and are engaging in solidarity actions to support one another.

We have the opportunity in the chemical industry to organize it and increase our bargaining strength and unity. In 2019, our local unions need to get involved in organizing drives at their companies. The best organizing happens when chemical workers organize other chemical workers.

In the meantime, let us enjoy our families and friends during this holiday season. It is a time to strengthen our family ties, reconnect with old friends, enjoy holiday activities and reflect on the meaning of the holidays. Be sure to connect with those who have lost loved ones because this time of year can be very difficult emotionally for them as they remember past holidays with those who have passed on.

May 2019 be a year of continuing to build our local unions and the USW chemical sector!

In Solidarity,

International Vice President Carol Landry
clandry@usw.org
Head of the USW’s chemical sector

(Continued on page 2)
worker observation to include what is happening in a worker’s environment.

Workers are graded on 35 critical behaviors, and distinction is made between member and contractor observations. Unlike member observations, contractor observations are subject to a quota.

This is an entirely different health and safety program from the USW's Triangle of Prevention program (TOP). TOP goes beyond behavioral safety to also focus on the Systems of Safety—design and engineering, mitigation devices, maintenance and inspection, warning devices, training, procedures and personal protective equipment. Workers and management jointly investigate near misses and incidents, track them and pass on what is learned so an incident does not happen again.

**Staffing Levels**

At the time of the council meeting, Local 10-74 from BASF’s Monaca, Pa., plant was concerned about the company’s refusal to fill the relief operator position and its desire to eliminate it. Without enough operators, work is not getting done.

Health and safety incidents are more likely to happen when there are not enough people to do the work, especially in a dangerous environment like a chemical plant.

When management fills the position with excessive overtime, it can cause worker fatigue, leading to employee mistakes that cause incidents and near misses.

Local 10-74’s contract expires in February 2019, and the local underwent Building Power training in September to prepare for bargaining.

**Issues to Tackle**

BASF facilities in McIntyre and Oconee, Ga., are next to one another. Local 9-237 (McIntyre) and Local 9-237-01 (Oconee) said both sites have new managers.

They said management conducted searches using dogs and fired employees with 15 years of service. One employee received a warning for having a beer can in a car trunk.

Local 9-233 from BASF’s Gordon, Ga., plant said it has four outstanding grievances involving terminated workers who have 20 or more years of service.

All three locals are having problems with the company not allowing employees on disability—who have received a doctor's clearance—to return to work.

Another issue is BASF’s desire to contract out full-time employees’ work.

**Contract Settlements**

Local 170-01 signed a five-year contract in November 2017 with BASF at its Attaulapulgus, Ga., plant. Six months later, the local gained five new members.

Local 174 at the BASF Quincy, Fla., facility signed a five-year contract last summer that included an increase in the company’s contribution to the 401k plan from 1 percent to 3 percent. Workers also received an increase in bereavement leave from three to five days. The local also won the right to determine which of the seven to eight temporary workers would get hired.

Local 13-620 members at the Geismar plant ratified a five-year agreement on Aug. 29 that included needed changes to the bid language, wage increases and more flexibility for the local to address issues on the shop floor.

The local successfully thwarted the company's original proposal to curtail bidding and seniority rights so it could reduce employee movement and restructure the plant. Instead, the local proposed a reorganization plan that met BASF’s concerns and did not radically restrict workers’ rights.

Watts credited the solidarity of the council for his local’s success.

“Because of the BASF council and the annual meeting at our plant, our negotiating committee went to the table with the confidence of knowing they were not alone,” Watts said.
under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard (29 CFR 1910.134). The standard requires an annual fit test to confirm the fit of any respirator that forms a tight seal on the wearer’s face before it is used in the workplace.

Once a fit test has been done to determine the best respirator model and size for a particular user, a user seal check should be done every time the respirator is to be worn to ensure an adequate seal is achieved.

The information sheet describes what is a user seal check (sometimes called a fit check). It tells how to do this check while wearing a filtering face piece respirator.

Descriptions are given on how to do a positive or negative pressure user seal check. Also, readers are told that a user seal check cannot be considered a substitute for a fit testing.

For more information, go to this link: 

---

Honeywell Recalls Two Kinds of Hard Hats

Honeywell is recalling its type 1 Fibre-Metal E2 and North Peak A79 hard hats because they can fail to protect users from impact, posing a risk of head injury.

The company sold the hard hats in a variety of colors. The Fibre-Metal E2 hard hats have a manufacture date of April 2016, May 2016, December 2017 or January 2018. The North Peak A79 hard hats were manufactured from April 2016 through January 2018. Only North Peak A79 hard hats with mold identification number 4 are included in this recall.

North by Honeywell, the mold identification number, and the manufacture date can be found on the underside of the hat’s brim. The date code is in a clock format: The numbers around the circle correspond to the 12 months of the year, the arrow points to the month of manufacture and the numbers on either side of the arrow represent the last two digits of the year.

Industrial protective equipment distributors sold these hard hats nationwide in their stores and through their e-commerce portals from April 2016 through January 2018. They were also sold on Amazon and other websites during the same time frame. Prices for the hard hats ranged between $7 and $21.

What To Do

No incidents or injuries have been reported involving these recalled hard hats. However, if your employer purchased one or both of them, you need to stop using them immediately and notify your joint and/or union health and safety committee(s), steward and supervisor about this recall issue. The company should call Honeywell to receive a product credit or voucher equal to the purchase price of the recalled hard hat. Honeywell can be reached toll-free at 888-212-6903 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday or online at www.honeywellsafety.com and click on “Voluntary Product Recall” for more information.

To report an incident involving these recalled hard hats, go to:

Honeywell voluntarily recalled these products under the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s Fast Track Recall process.

---

Coming up in January

The January 2019 Chemical Solutions newsletter will contain stories on the Evonik Council, DowDuPont North American Labor Council and the Solvay Council. We also will have some health and safety articles and a feature story about a chemical local in Knoxville, Tenn.

Let’s Stay Connected!

1) Sign up to receive the Chemical Solutions newsletter in your home email box by going to http://usw.to/ChemicalSolutions.
2) Sign up today for chemical text messages! Text the word CHEMICAL to 47486. When asked, type in your company name.
3) If you are on Facebook, be sure to check out the USW Chemical Workers Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/chemicalworkers/